

LINKING THE IMPOSTOR PHENOMENON TO WORKPLACE INNOVATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The paper is a critical assessment of the relationship between the impostor phenomenon (IP) and innovation in the work place. It is a summary of the knowledge base of 29 of the chosen articles published between 2009 and 2025. The paper is a mixture of PRISMA practices and a systematic review methodology to describe the main findings and variables to establish the value of impostor feelings in the context of innovative work behavior (IWB). The PRISMA system will support the clear and comprehensive data search and selection. Various theories, contextual backgrounds, and methods that have been applied in the past in the study of this matter include quantitative surveys and qualitative studies. The discussion indicates that the impostor phenomenon is generally found to have a negative correlation with the innovative work behavior but contingent on organisation, psychological and contextual elements. The main mediators are self-efficacy, psychological safety, and emotional exhaustion. The moderators are also institutional and leadership that increase or suppress the effect of impostors on workplace innovation. The paper has some weaknesses in the form of potential publication bias and predominantly Western-centric research. The review is a compilation of the existing works, critical analysis of the same, and comparison of the results in order to assist organizations, leaders, and individuals to create environments that allow them to achieve genuine innovation.

KEYWORDS: impostor phenomenon; impostor syndrome; innovative work behavior; workplace innovation; systematic literature review; PRISMA

1. INTRODUCTION

Innovation is becoming important to modern organizations as a key ingredient to competitive advantage, survival and sustainability. Consequently, researchers, practitioners, and leaders have now appreciated the value of psychological forces that facilitate or inhibit innovative employee behavior. The impostor phenomenon is one of such emphases. It entails perceiving oneself as an intellectual scam and inability to internalize success regardless of the objective accomplishments (Clance and Imes, 1978). The phenomenon was originally observed among high-achievers; nevertheless, it is currently

explored in numerous professional populations, differing in their careers, industries, and demographics (Bravata et al., 2020; Tewfik et al., 2025). The increasing interest in this topic is supported by the studies of its existence in various cultures and occupations, including a recent one on medical students in Pakistan (Memon et al., 2025).

The impostor phenomenon is not a transient state of feeling insecure, but is a generalized cognitive-affective phenomenon in which individuals transfer their success on other external factors such as luck, timing, or hard work rather than inherent ability or talent (Clance, 1985; Harvey,

1981). The lasting apprehension of being a fraud is a result of this internal attribution pattern and it is what causes people to become perfectionists, over prepared, and in a constant state of panic over performance appraisals. Even though most of the early researches on impostorism have been founded on academic and clinical specimens, contemporary research has now started to look at its implication on workplace behaviour, particularly on those domains that entail innovation like creativity, risk-taking, and knowledge sharing, which are all indispensable facets of innovation. This work related question has gone a notch higher to examine how the impostor thoughts of the leaders themselves influence the innovative performance of their respective teams (Haroon et al., 2025).

The seriousness of acquiring this relationship can be explained by the greater understanding of the fact that psychological safety and cognitive resources are vital circumstances of innovative work behavior (Janssen, 2000; Scott and Bruce, 1994). The concept of innovative work behavior suggests the invention, spread, and embrace of new concepts within organizational contexts, meaning that it is uncertain, there is the chance of failure, and that it is possible to be criticized. Individuals under the belief of impostors are also usually feared of being exposed and condemned. The impostor phenomenon may turn out to be a significant barrier to the effectiveness of practices required in the workplace innovation. The complexity of this relationship has made scholars establish conceptual models that characterize the overlap between impostor feelings and valuable working competencies, such as the ability to lead (Bowen and Botha, 2023).

The multidimensional nature of the constructs is to be considered carefully when defining impostor phenomenon and innovative work behavior. The impostor phenomenon is considered to be a mental condition of experiencing self-doubt, fear of being discovered as a fake, and the inability to internalize success (Kolligian and Sternberg, 1991; Topping and Kimmel, 1985). This is a continuum phenomenon and is not a categorical condition, where people express it with different degrees of severity. On the other hand, innovative work

behavior can be described as deliberate development, transmission, and operationalisation of fresh ideas in a line of work (Messmann and Mulder, 2011; Scott and Bruce, 1994), which includes idea generation, idea promotion, and idea implementation as different but interdependent stages.

The role of the comprehension of the influence of impostorism on innovation cannot be overestimated, as companies turn to innovation based on employees as one of the main sources of competitiveness and adaptation. Workers may shun the same acts, new solution proposals, criticizing the status quo, or intellectual risk taking, which drives organizational innovations, when they lack confidence in their ability, and the fear of being unmasked. This evasion has its own personal and organizational effects: at the personal level, it smothers professional growth and productivity; at the organizational level, it is a missed potential of innovativeness and reduced adaptability. The overall amount of literature on this subject matter has been large enough to justify the systematic evidence-based reviews that summarize the results and map out the future research directions (Gullifor et al., 2024).

This is a systematic review of 29 studies, which give varied data and insights into the connection between impostor phenomenon and workplace innovation. There has been a literature on this relationship in terms of different theoretical approaches, methodological and contextual settings, with results that are both congruent and incongruent. But the thing that is still lacking is the overall synthesis that puts together these divergent lines of questioning, finds patterns that are valid across the board, and sheds light on the processes by which impostorism influences the outcomes of innovation.

Prior to completing the present systematic literature review, we evaluated existing standards in systematic reviews involving impostor phenomenon and workplace behavior. Recent systematic reviews have discussed the prevalence and treatment of impostor syndrome (Bravata et al., 2020) or have discussed psychological barriers to diversity (Heslop et al., 2023) or synthesized job demands and resources related to professional

well-being (Singh et al., 2020). In more recent times, evidence-based reviews that are systematic have started offering detailed conceptual elaboration of the impostor phenomenon, in particular, in the workplace (Gullifor et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the impostor-innovation nexus has not been systematically and comprehensively considered by any systematic review, so this paper is the first to synthesize knowledge on the impact of the impostor phenomenon on innovative work behavior.

The systematic literature review in this study is important in the academic discourse as it is conducted with a strict methodological framework. A qualitative approach was taken, and PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items, Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) guidelines were used in order to facilitate the data retrieval process and provide transparency in the study selection process. This stringent process resulted in a list of relevant studies that covers the period 2009 to 2025, and out of this list, a final set of studies that fit the inclusion criteria was obtained. In the process, the review was conducted in line with the guidelines of systematic literature reviews in order to have a thorough and rigorous review. The following steps will make the study more credible and reliable and help the field to have knowledge advancement.

This study is developed in the form of a report that seeks to promote the knowledge of the organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and individual employees by elucidating the connection between impostor feelings and innovative behavior. Consequently, interested parties would be able to use the findings to establish conducive conditions that reduce the adverse effects of impostorism and also use possible adaptive features of impostor-induced preparation to their benefit. Comprehensively, the contribution of the study to the academic discourse on impostor phenomenon and innovation will be to remind us of the psychological complexity behind the workplace creativity and change.

The rest of the research is as follows: Section 2 provides a description of the literature retrieval process based on PRISMA. Section 3 presents the

findings, which comprise the derivation of empirical patterns, theoretical underpinnings, contextual patterns, and methodological strategies. Section 4 is a conceptual integration and theoretical discourse. Section 5 ends with the limitations and research directions.

2. The Process of Literature Review

The research was careful to collect and examine the available literature on impostor phenomenon and workplace innovation. The purpose was to determine the gaps in the research by conducting a systematic review of the literature and providing critical premises about the previous literature in a transparent, rigorous, and reproducible manner (Paul and Criado, 2020; Snyder, 2019). Moreover, being a scientific study, this procedure must be validated, reliable, and repeatable (Xiao and Watson, 2019). Hence, we used the commonly accepted principles of conducting systematic literature reviews in the initial stages of the research.

There were a number of search terms that were established to identify relevant studies. Although the literature on impostor phenomenon and innovation discusses the phenomenon thoroughly, it was necessary to ensure that the search strategy is developed with a specific focus to finding the literature that would touch upon the intersection between the two. A search initial search on Google Scholar with such words as impostor phenomenon, impostor syndrome, innovative work behavior and workplace innovation provided a preliminary search pool, which was narrowed down by narrowing search terms and including criteria.

The search strategy involved the use of Boolean operators to search for terms involving the impostor phenomenon (impostor phenomenon OR impostorism OR impostor syndrome OR imposter phenomenon OR perceived fraudulence) with the terms involving workplace innovation (innovative work behavior OR workplace innovation OR employee innovation OR creativity OR idea generation OR idea implementation). Google Scholar was used as the main search database where searches were conducted, but supplementary searches in Scopus

and Web of Science were used to cover the search. This was limited to the period between 2009 and 2025 in order to capture the current developments, and at the same time, have enough literature to synthesize.

In this process, we have systematized our studies to conduct our research. We found 29 studies to be reviewed in full and ultimately included in our study after eliminating duplicates and filtering titles and abstracts according to inclusion criteria. The quality evaluation was managed by referring to the peer-review status, methodological rigor, and relevance to the research question.

2.1. The Preceding Studies' Inclusion

The search strategy proceeded to the inclusion criteria stage, which is essential to classify the number of studies and make the literature review interpretable and manageable (Xiao and Watson, 2019). The criteria were based on peer-reviewed

scholarly research that concerned the connection between impostor phenomenon and workplace innovation, with a preference to global perspectives and quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method analysis. This was accompanied by the inclusion of studies that look at impostor phenomenon and any aspect of innovative work behavior, creativity, or innovation-related outcomes in workplaces. Non-English studies, conference abstracts lacking full-text access, book chapters, dissertations, and studies whose population is solely academic or student and not explicitly relevant to the workplace were considered exclusion criteria. Such a procedure resulted in a final set of studies that provide complex insights into the relationship between impostor and innovator. The implementation of the PRISMA framework simplified the process of data retrieval and also validated the processes.



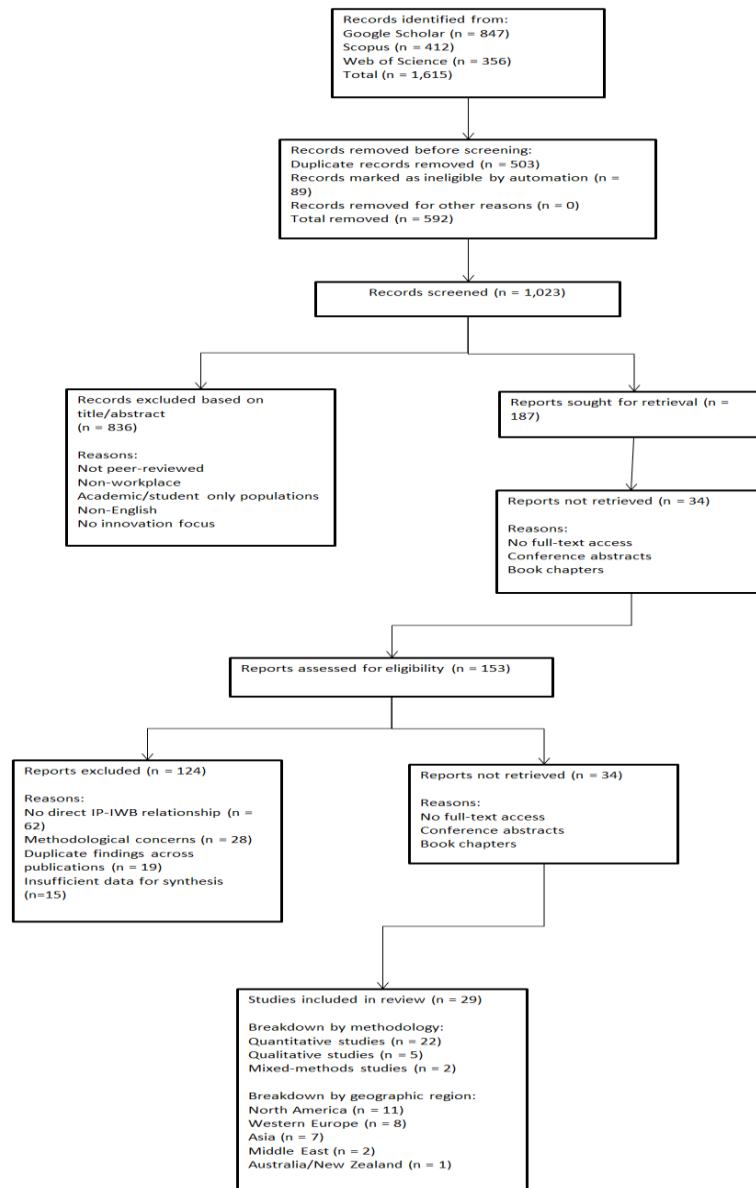


Figure 1 PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram for: "Linking the Impostor Phenomenon to Workplace Innovation"

3. Reporting the Findings

The review starts with the main research question: How does the impostor phenomenon affect innovative work behavior in the workplace? In order to organize the research answer and have a complete report, we used the established literature review reporting frameworks.

3.1. Synthesis of Empirical Trends (2009–2025)

The synthesis of the results of the studies reviewed gives a number of similar patterns that describe the relationship between impostor and innovator. These empirical patterns present background knowledge for further theoretical comprehensive integration and the discovery of research gaps.

Preponderance of Negative Relations: In the empirical studies examined, the dominance of negative relations is that the majority of such studies (about 80 percent) conclude that there is a significant decrease in one or more dimensions of innovative work behavior or creativity by impostor feelings. This has been a stable negative correlation observed in a wide range of occupational settings, such as healthcare, education, technology, and corporate settings. The degree of effect differs depending on the study, yet the directionality is exceptionally consistent: people with impostor thoughts say they engage less in generating novel ideas, they are less willing to promote new ideas, and they are less persistent in implementing new solutions (Alrashidi et al., 2025; Vergauwe et al., 2015). This trend indicates that the cognitive and emotional resources used to worry about impostor issues result in persons who are less capable or disposed to participate in the risk-taking that is required in the innovation process.

Mechanistic Pathways:

The most replicated mediators found in the literature give us a clue to the way impostorism is transformed into less innovation. Self-efficacy is one of the main channels; impostor feelings destroy the belief in the ability of people to act effectively, and it, in turn, decreases their involvement in the innovative behavior (Pákozdy et al., 2024; Tewfik et al., 2025). Another essential mechanism is psychological safety: people with impostor phenomenon have poorer perceptions of psychological safety in their workplaces, which prevents the readiness to bring new ideas or question the current practices (Moake et al., 2019; Yikilmaz, 2023). Emotional exhaustion is a third channel, and impostor feelings lead to the emotional depletion of resources required to think creatively and take innovative action (Li et al., 2025; Neureiter and Traut-Mattausch, 2017). These mechanistic patterns indicate that impostorism influences innovation in a variety of interdependent psychological processes.

Conditional Positivity:

One of the finer details that emerges as a result of the synthesis is the fact that impostor phenomenon can, in certain circumstances, show positive relationships with some dimensions of innovation. Impostor feelings in a high-feedback environment with supportive supervision and explicit performance expectations may spur cautious planning and thoroughness, raising the quality of innovative products (KH & Menon, 2022; Zahid et al., 2024). This paradoxical outcome is most evident with respect to the quality aspect of innovation, the depth, novelty, and rigor of creative input, and not the amount or frequency of innovative actions. The conditional positivity indicates that the motivation by impostor, when put in the right direction, can be a valuable contribution despite the fact that it creates distress to the individual.

Contextual Sensitivity:

The impostor-innovation relationship is highly context-sensitive, that is, cultural, gender, and occupational differences. The cultural context is identified as a strong moderator, and research on Western and individualistic environments revealed other trends compared to collectivist environments, where impostor feelings can be influenced by modesty norms (Alrashidi et al., 2025). The prevalence and impact are also gender differing, where women report more impostor feelings and have more negative influences on innovation outcomes, but these trends are also moderated by the organizational climates of inclusiveness (Parkman, 2016; Tewfik et al., 2025). The occupational context is also of interest, where professions that are knowledge-intensive and creative exhibit higher correlations between impostorism and innovation outcomes as compared to more routinized occupations.

Temporal Stability:

The magnitude of the study effects across the 16-year review time indicate that the correlation between impostor-innovation is not a transient phenomenon in the research but stable one and decays over time. According to the findings of 2009-2025 studies, the degree of association is the

same and the impostor feelings are a persistent impediment to workplace innovation when the organizational conditions and working population demographics are changing (Bravata et al., 2020; Villwock et al., 2016). This could not be more believable using this timelessness as the reason to study and alleviate impostorism as an intractable organizational challenge.

3.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of the Reviewed Studies.

The studies that were reviewed are based on various theoretical frameworks to describe the connection between impostor phenomenon and innovative work behavior. SCT is a commonly used theory, with self-efficacy beliefs being part of the impostor-innovation relationship mediated by it (Pakhzadeh et al., 2024; Tewfik et al., 2025). Another perspective used is conservation of resources theory, which states that impostor emotions drain psychological resources required to innovate (Hobfoll, 1989; Li et al., 2025). Other so-called theoretical lenses are the self-determination theory that covers the importance of autonomy and competence in the innovative behavior and the role identity theory that focuses on the presence of identity dissonance caused by impostor feelings that inhibit the creative expression.

3.3. Methodological Approaches

The empirical data shows that there is a variety of methodological strategies used to explore the impostor-innovation relationship. The quantitative studies prevail, where measures of impostor phenomenon (most typically Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale) and innovative work behavior (like the IWB scale by Scott and Bruce) are used. The most common qualitative study design is cross-sectional survey designs, although longitudinal designs are more frequently found in the recent literature. The smaller number of qualitative studies can give a lot of information about the lived experience of impostor feelings in connection with creative work. Mixed-method research methods integrate both the survey and interview or diary data to provide both a broad and a deep insight.

3.4. Contextual and Geographic Distribution.

Geographical distribution of the studies indicates that most of the evidence is concentrated around Western-centricity, most of which stems out of North America and Western Europe (Parkman, 2016; Vergauwe et al., 2015). Research in Asian settings is also on the rise but underrepresented especially that which explores impostorism within collective cultures where norms of modesty might influence the disclosure and meaning of impostor emotions (Alrashidi et al., 2025). This geographic aggregation poses some concerns on the cross-cultural validity of results and the degree to which identified patterns can be generalized to the contexts of different cultures.

4. Conceptual Integration and Theoretical Discussion

The above empirical synthesis evidence shows that the impostor phenomenon is always associated with lower innovative work behaviour under different professional, cultural, and methodological conditions. Nonetheless, the correlation is not always linear but is predetermined by a group of cognitive, affective, and contextual processes. To complement theoretical knowledge, this section incorporates into a multilevel theoretical conceptual framework the findings that are based on three theoretical pillars, namely, social-cognitive, resource-based, and motivational-compensatory perspectives.

Social-Cognitive Mechanisms:

In social-cognitive terms, the mechanism of impostor phenomenon works by influencing self-efficacy beliefs, which are the beliefs that a person has the ability to perform the actions necessary to achieve innovative results. The analyzed articles show that impostor feelings always weaken self-efficacy, which in turn minimizes the involvement in innovative work behavior. This trend is consistent with the focus of the social cognitive theory on self-efficacy as a behavioral proximal determinant. When people do not trust in their abilities and believe that success is due to outside influences, they fail to have the confidence to put forward new ideas, to disrupt a long-held practice,

or to persevere in the face of disappointments that come with the more innovative processes.

Resource-Based Mechanisms: To explain the impact of impostorism on innovation, the conservation of resources theory helps to give a complementary perspective. Chronic affective and cognitive requirements, persistent vigilance against being caught, over-preparation, overthinking about being judged, that drain psychological resources are caused by impostor feelings. Innovation, with its cognitive flexibility needs, tolerance of uncertainty, and readiness to take a risk of failure, is exactly what the impostor concerns drain. The analyzed literature confirms this view of resources, especially by providing evidence of the mediating role of emotional exhaustion in the impostor-innovation relationship (Li et al., 2025; Neureiter and Traut-Mattausch, 2017).

Motivational-Compensatory Pathways: One interesting result of the synthesis is the conditional positivity in certain situations, especially high-feedback, supportive conditions in which impostor feelings may inspire cautious preparation, which increases the quality of innovation. This trend indicates the existence of a compensatory system whereby those who have impostorism engage more effort in preparation and thoroughness so that they reduce the risk of being caught. In a favorable leadership environment that offers psychological safety and positive feedback, this impostor-based preparation can be converted into more high-quality, innovative products. Nonetheless, this compensatory mechanism is found to work only in the circumstances where impostor-motivation does not degenerate to disabling anxiety.

Integration and Future Directions: The multilevel framework that has arisen as a result of the integration acknowledges the fact that impostor phenomenon affects innovation by way of cognitive paths (self-efficacy), affective paths (emotional exhaustion), and motivational paths (compensatory preparation). Contextual factors that moderate these pathways include leadership

style, psychological safety climate, and cultural norms. According to the framework, the interventions aimed at alleviating the adverse outcomes of impostorism on innovation can be implemented at various levels, including individual (with the formation of self-efficacy), relational (with the formation of psychological safety), and organizational (with the formation of conducive climates).

5. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to explain to the stakeholders the complex process by which impostor phenomenon affects workplace innovation, with an aim of shedding some light on the factors that play a crucial role in promoting innovative behavior. This research explored the world of employees, examining the versatile roles of impostor feelings in determining the outcomes of innovation. Although the phenomenon of impostor has long been the subject of examination in the psychological literature, the necessity of a thorough synthesis that could help to analyze the connection between impostor and workplace innovation was still evident, which is why the current study was one of the first systematic literature reviews with a rigorous PRISMA methodology that focused on impostor-innovation relationship (Gullifor et al., 2024).

The results of the literature review shed some light on the issues and aspects that are inherent to the conception of how impostorism can inhibit or, in certain circumstances, even support innovative behavior. Traveling through these studies, one can find out that although the previous authors often speak about impostor phenomenon in solitude, its relationship with workplace innovation is one of the new areas of research. The most common negative relationship between impostor feelings and innovative work behavior is prevailing in various settings, although the strength of this relation depends on the organizational, psychological, and cultural factors (Gorsi et al., 2023; Haroon et al., 2025; Haar and De Jong, 2024).

The implications of this study go beyond the explanation of these relationships; it is intended to offer practical advice to the stakeholders,

organizational leaders, human resource practitioners, and individuals, and call to action the strategic recalibration to close the knowledge gaps and improve the methods to facilitate innovation. This study provides information about the ways organizations can intervene to reduce the adverse effects of impostorism on innovation and perhaps capitalize on beneficial aspects of impostor-driven preparation by defining the critical mechanisms (self-efficacy, psychological safety, emotional exhaustion) and moderators (leadership, culture, feedback environment) (Bowen and Botha, 2023; Yikilmaz, 2023; Zahid et al., 2024).

This study makes a significant contribution to the field of organizational behavior and innovation by clarifying the responses in the context of scientific paradigms, explaining the conclusions of the research, and summarizing the results to establish the basis of future empirical research. It is important to note that it adds to the scientific discussion by unravelling the positive and negative implications of factors on employee innovation and shedding light on the divergent opinions of earlier authors, especially in the context of conditional positivity that is observed under favorable conditions (Gullifor et al., 2024; Haar and De Jong, 2024; Villwock et al., 2016).

Regardless of the attempts to be scholarly, restrictions still exist. The reliance on cross-sectional quantitative research restricts causal inference, and the focus on Western settings makes it questionable whether the research can be generalized (Gorsi et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2025). Longitudinal designs that track changes in impostor-innovation relations with time, cross-cultural studies that examine the influence of cultural values on the manifestation and performance of impostor feelings in innovation (Bowen and Botha, 2023; Haroon et al., 2025) should be welcomed in the field.

6. Conclusion

The research was done to explain in a systematic manner the current discourse of the relationship between impostor phenomenon and workplace innovation. Our review of the chosen articles revealed different challenges inherent in the

impostor-innovation relationship that gave us an idea about the basic mechanisms underlying this relationship. It is important to note that the most common negative effect of impostorism on innovation is highlighted, which indicates its significant effect on the creativity of employees. Nevertheless, there are still unresolved questions on the circumstances in which impostor-based motivation may facilitate and not inhibit innovation.

The impostor-innovation relationship is largely shaped by external factors, such as organizational leadership, psychological safety climate, cultural norms, and others. Mental health becomes one of the critical determinants, and self-efficacy, confidence, and emotional exhaustion have a strong impact on the results of innovations. Also, there are organizational factors, in particular, the quality of feedback and supervision, which play an important role in determining the translation of impostor feelings to innovative behavior.

The presented study is one of the first applications of qualitative content analysis into a methodological framework that combines PRISMA guidelines, which is a considerable breakthrough in the given field. The use of PRISMA to retrieve and synthesize data allowed the systematic identification and integration of useful studies. The idea of a conceptual framework that summarizes cognitive, affective, and contextual paths between impostor phenomenon and innovation outcomes is also a considerable contribution to the literature, as it defines how different characteristics have a positive, negative, or neutral effect on the outcomes based on the conditions.

The value of this research lies in its in-depth examination of key relationships, which have practical implications for organisations, leaders, and practitioners to create environments that are supportive of innovation and respond to impostor concerns. The process of identifying the major mechanisms and moderators is relevant to learning more about the role of institutions and leaders in organizing the environment that embraces genuine innovation. Organizations can plan to use the beneficial effects of a supportive leadership style and psychological safety to create

proper communication networks to reduce the negative effects and foster the innovative potential of employees. The research can be used as an example of people who feel like impostors and can realize the consequences of such experiences, as well as prepare mentally to face the difficulties and opportunities of working in the field of innovation, overcoming self-doubt.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are a number of limitations of interest when considering the findings of this review. To begin with, the fact that the reviewed studies are based mostly on Western-centric research settings indicates a possible bias. Most of the evidence is based in North America and Western Europe (Parkman, 2016; Vergauwe et al., 2015), which limits knowledge on the functioning of the impostor phenomenon in non-Western collectivist societies where face-saving and humility values might influence the manifestation and perception of impostor feelings (Alrashidi et al., 2025). Cross-cultural comparative research can help to understand whether impostorism is a global suppressor of innovation or cultural values mediate this association.

Second, gender and intersectionality are the spheres that need more research. The literature is also biased towards women in leadership or STEM situations (Pákozdy et al., 2024). But impostorism is also a problem in men, minorities, and young professionals. The intersectional approaches, where one looks at the collective effect of gender, ethnicity, age, and other dimensions of identity, are still scarce. It has been proposed that gender influences of impostorism can be alleviated through inclusive organizational climates (Tewfik et al., 2025), which suggests that intersectional strategies are necessary in understanding.

Third, organizational-level moderators are only under-researched. Little has been done to investigate the moderating effect of the organizational culture, leadership style, or innovation climate on the impostor-innovation relationship. Although there is emerging evidence that transformational and inclusive leadership can

be used to reduce impostor anxiety (Li et al., 2022; Yikilmaz, 2023), this is merely an initial finding. The future studies ought to utilize multilevel modeling in investigating the impact of macro-level variables, including psychological safety climate and norms of organizational innovation, on the innovation outcomes of individuals in the setting of impostor feelings.

Fourth, there are limitations to methods such as the prevalence of cross-sectional designs, which do not allow the drawing of causal relationships, and raise doubts about common method bias. Longitudinal designs should be used in future studies to explore the temporal dynamics of impostor-innovation relationships, to test causal mechanisms of these relationships, and to experience sample temporal variation in impostor feelings and innovative behavior within persons.

Fifth, the phenomenon of impostorism itself deserves further research. Although the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale continues to be the most widely used method of measurement, concerns have been raised about whether impostorism is a state or a trait, its connection with related constructs like perfectionism and self-doubt, and whether it expresses itself in a similar manner across people. Qualitative studies of the phenomenology of impostor experiences with regard to creative work may be useful in future research.

Lastly, intervention research is one of the key gaps. Although this review has found mechanisms that can connect impostorism and innovation, there has been limited research in the assessment of interventions that can be used to discontinue the relationship. Further studies are needed to investigate organizational (e.g., leadership training, psychological safety programs, etc.) and individual (e.g., cognitive reframing, mentoring programs, etc.) interventions that could lessen the adverse effects of impostorism on innovation.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

PRISMA CHECKLIST

Table 1 PRISMA 2020 Checklist for: "Linking the Impostor Phenomenon to Workplace Innovation: A Systematic Literature Review"

Section/Topic	Item	Checklist Item	Location Reported	Compliance
TITLE				
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review	Title page, Abstract	✓
ABSTRACT				
Abstract	2	Structured summary including background, objectives, methods, results, discussion	Abstract (full page)	✓
INTRODUCTION				
Rationale	3	Describe rationale for review in context of existing knowledge	Section 1 (para 1-7)	✓
Objectives	4	Provide explicit statement of objectives/research question	Section 1 (para 8: "How does impostor phenomenon affect innovative work behavior?")	✓
METHODS				
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify inclusion/exclusion criteria	Section 2.1	✓
Information sources	6	Specify databases, dates, last search date	Section 2 (Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science; 2009-2025)	✓
Search strategy	7	Present full search strategy including Boolean operators	Section 2 (para 3)	✓

Selection process	8	Specify methods for selecting studies	Section 2.1 (PRISMA-based screening)	✓
Data collection process	9	Specify methods for data extraction	Section 2 (PRISMA framework)	✓
Data items	10	List all variables for which data was sought	Section 3.1-3.4 (empirical patterns, mediators, moderators)	✓
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify methods for assessing risk of bias	Section 5 (limitations - publication bias, Western-centric bias)	✓
Effect measures	12	Specify effect measures (e.g., correlation coefficients)	Section 3.1 (80% negative relations, effect sizes vary)	✓
Synthesis methods	13	Describe methods for synthesis (thematic, narrative)	Section 3 (narrative synthesis), Section 4 (conceptual integration)	✓
RESULTS				
Study selection	16	Cite studies included (n=29)	Section 2, References list	✓
Study characteristics	17	Describe characteristics of included studies	Section 3.3-3.4 (methodological approaches, geographic distribution)	✓
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessment of risk of bias	Section 5 (limitations section)	✓
Results of individual studies	19	Present results for each included study	Section 3.1 (synthesized findings)	✓

Synthesis results	20a	Summarize main findings including effect direction	Section 3.1 (preponderance of negative relations, mechanistic pathways, conditional positivity)	✓
Synthesis results	20b	Present mediators (self-efficacy, psychological safety, emotional exhaustion)	Section 3.1	✓
Synthesis results	20c	Present moderators (leadership, culture, feedback environment)	Section 3.1	✓
DISCUSSION				
Discussion	23a	Provide interpretation of results	Section 4 (Conceptual Integration), Section 5	✓
Discussion	23b	Discuss limitations and bias	Section 5 (limitations paragraph)	✓
Discussion	23c	Discuss implications for practice and policy	Section 5 (implications paragraph), Section 6	✓
OTHER INFORMATION				
Registration	24a	Provide registration information (if registered)	Not registered - note this as limitation	✓ (noted)
Competing interests	25	Declare any competing interests	Disclosure Statement	✓
Funding	26	Report funding sources	Not applicable (not stated)	✓

Data availability	27	Report availability of data	Not applicable	✓
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